

# KENNETH "BLACKIE" FREITAS

## Haleakala Ranch, Maui

Born in 1941, Blackie was raised on the 121-year-old Haleakala Ranch. In September 2008, he was recognized for 50 years of service, surpassing his father's 49 year record. Blackie continues his role as the Ranch's General Foreman with no plans to retire soon because "the Ranch is my life." He has been married to his longtime sweetheart, Rose, for over 49 years. They have two children, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



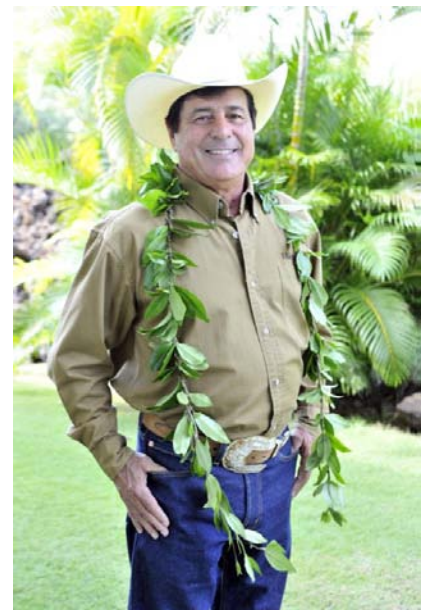
A 4th generation employee of Haleakala Ranch, he follows in the footsteps of his father, Ernest Freitas, grandfather Louis Freitas, and great uncle Joe "Francis" DeRego. Brother Leroy "Blondie" Freitas was also a Ranch employee with over 45 years of service. Blackie worked with his father doing maintenance and started working full-time in 1958 for 67 cents an hour. When his Dad retired, he became Foreman. Current Cattle Manager Greg Friel refers to Blackie as the backbone of the ranch, helping him to train the next generation. Presently he maintains the water system with its

pipelines, reservoirs, and tanks spread over the 30,000 acre Ranch. Blackie created the first tire-water trough system, used on Haleakala Ranch and other ranches as well. He is responsible for corral construction and helped design and build the Haleakala Pen, the Old Scale Pen, and others. There isn't a part of the Ranch he doesn't know.

Blackie has fond memories of growing up and working and playing on the Ranch. As a teenager, he delivered milk for the Haleakala Dairy. Blackie worked in the slaughterhouse and was also a stable boy under Johnny Sakamoto. Although times have changed Blackie retains the standards of the old ways that he learned from his forefathers and under the leadership of Richard "Manduke" Baldwin and Manduke's son, Peter Baldwin.

Blackie is well known for his one-of-a-kind beautiful, handmade, stainless steel horse bits and spurs. Also Blackie makes all of the Haleakala Ranch's branding irons.

Blackie has worked with and learned from notable *paniolo* legends from yesterday and today: Louis Freitas, David Ventura, Harold Amoral, George





“Sonny Boy” Manoa, Henry Silva, Benji Rollins, and Glen Souza. His love for Haleakala Ranch, the preservation of his paniolo heritage make him worthy of the honor of being inducted into the Hall of fame.

Blackie is well known for his one-of-a-kind beautiful, handmade, stainless steel horse bits and spurs. Also Blackie makes all of the Haleakala Ranch's branding irons.

Blackie has worked with and learned from notable *paniolo* legends from yesterday and today: Louis Freitas, David Ventura, Harold Amoral, George “Sonny Boy” Manoa, Henry Silva, Benji Rollins, and Glen Souza. His love for Haleakala Ranch, the preservation of his paniolo heritage make him worthy of the honor of being inducted into the Hall of fame.



---

## Kenneth “Blackie” Freitas Interview March 24, 2011

LW: Today is March 24, 2011. I'm at Haleakala Ranch with Kenneth “Blackie” Freitas. You have a long distinguished family history in ranching.

KF: Yeah... it goes four generation. Get my grandfather, my father, and my grandmother's brother. So that I consider four generations. And my brother worked here. Only me and my brother Blondie worked here. He worked here forty-five years and my father worked forty-nine. I'm still on number fifty-three. (Laughs.)

LW: So your grandfather... who was he?

KF: He was Louis Freitas, on the Freitas side.

LW: And he worked for this ranch?

KF: He worked for this ranch. He used to live up here. Had all houses up in this area. At the ranch had about forty something houses.

LW: And people who worked on the ranch lived there?

KF: All live on the ranch.

LW: So Haleakala has been a ranch for a long time.

KF: Oh, yeah... hundred... and this year in September going be one hundred twenty-three years. And I'll be fifty-three years. Same.

LW: How big is Haleakala Ranch?

KF: Well, they sold a lot of land so I really can't give you an exact amount.

LW: Well... roughly.

KF: Yeah. I can tell you... maybe... I know one time it was thirty something but I no can answer on you that.

LW: So Louis Freitas is your grandfather...

KF: Right.

LW: And what did he do on the ranch?

KF: He was a foreman. Outside foreman. Like you take care all the fence works. Anything... you know ranching was not only doing cattle work. Fencing and water and building corrals and everything that goes with it.

LW: So he was the foreman for the outdoors?

KF: Right. Then my father came a foreman afterwards also.

LW: So your grandfather would have been in the '30's?

KF: Yeah.

LW: When was your father on the ranch, then?

KF: You go back and when you count that's many years. He was here pretty... born here. You know he worked on the ranch from way back. This is where he started.

LW: So he was born here, right?

KF: Yeah, yeah. Actually no, he was born on the ranch side but he worked here all his life. Just like me. Me and my brother Blondie.

LW: So Blondie and you started about when?

KF: Hoo... was... I started around '58. And Blondie was about '57, something like that.

LW: How old were you guys then?

KF: We was eighteen years old. When we started work here. We used to work here summer times also. And they used to hire some kids. We used to work here actually clean the pasture. Pull all the young kalepo trees. And we used to make sixty-seven cents an hour. (Laughs.) And... when I got married I was making what... dollar ten cents an hour. See way back in time the ranch used to give you houses... free houses. Stay on the ranch. Get few houses left but most of the houses they knock it down already. But way back in time they used to give free houses. And we could buy meat for ten cents a pound. And the ranch used to give free milk, according to the families. And free diesel oil to make hot water. And kerosene for the kerosene stove. So... that's how we was brought up in those times.

LW: So you didn't have to have a lot of cash salary...

KF: Yeah... and those days they used to get paid once a month so... cash job.

LW: The ranch provided mostly everything else?

KF: Everything else. They would provide that. Even as young kids, we used to go school, the ranch would take the kid. We used to walk down to the stables here and they'd take us to school. Makawao School, also St. Joseph's School. And they pick you up. All the grade school, you know.

LW: And bring you back.

KF: Bring you back.

LW: So how many kids would that have been?

KF: Oh shucks. This ranch was big and so was the dairy. Had the Haleakala Dairy down here. And the dairy was like separate but they worked... we all like one. Till afterwards when the dairy was on their own. But then the union came in, they changed things around.

LW: The union?

KF: Yeah. So the ranch stayed as a ranch and the dairy was the dairy.

LW: Oh the dairy, you mean.

KF: Yeah, the Haleakala Dairy.

LW: But what union?

KF: I don't know. A labor union.

LW: Oh, for the dairy?

KF: Yeah. The dairy joined the union, the ranch didn't join, so they split up the dairy and the ranch.

LW: I see. Interesting. When would that have been?

KF: I would say maybe... maybe was in the '60's some time. This was the Haleakala Dairy right down there. The dairy and the ranch was together otherwise those days was. Oh, you could make a softball team for the ranch and the dairy make their own. You know what I mean? And they had another plant down below and they used to make their own. Used to play softball.

LW: Oh, you had enough people to make a team.

KF: Yeah, you can get a softball team. When Christmas time come they take you to Makawao, a big center and over there the ranchers and the dairy get together. Just like a party. Was good.

LW: That was at Christmas?

KF: Yeah. Christmas time. Yeah, they used to cut Christmas trees for the ranch for all the people living on the ranch. That's how I was brought up. In the old times.

LW: So your dad... what did your dad do?

KF: He did the same thing like my grandfather.

LW: He took over foreman from him?

KF: Yeah, he took over foreman but he was little more higher foreman. Like the general foreman.

LW: Oh, for the cattle, too?

KF: Well, more in the building of stuff. You know... like everything else. He took another guy's place who retired. My old man took his place. Like a general foreman. Did all kind. You know ranch, you do everything. Had slaughter houses and had all different type of work. Water, making corrals and fencing. Cowboy life... Paniolo is not only just ride a horse. For keep cattle on the ranch, first of all you got to worry about the water. Then you got to get the fence. The cowboy come like number three. (Laughs.) Before you can put the cattle in there you got to get water. So water is number one.

LW: So there was a foreman for water?

KF: No... he (father) used to take care all. We had slaughter house, we had everything before on the ranch. Those things... all.

LW: So who was foreman for the slaughter house? The same guy as the cattle guy or...

KF: No... they had their cowboy foreman separate from the general foreman. We had two.

LW: So the cowboy foreman did what?

KF: Taking care just the cowboys. That section. 'Cause the ranch wasn't only everybody go cowboy, you know. Some people do different jobs.

LW: So water came under the general foreman.

KF: Yeah, right.

LW: And all the buildings and... who took care of the pasture... the grass?

KF: To clean up the pasture with weed control... my old man do it. He did all that.

LW: The general outside foreman did that, too. So that's cleaning and...

KF: Yeah, everything else he did.

LW: Do you seed the pasture?

KF: Yeah, for some pastures we need fertilizer, way back in time.

LW: So you fertilize them, too?

KF: Yeah. Some of the pastures.

LW: So Haleakala has all same elevation or... higher and lower.

KF: No... it go all the way up to the crater. Not the top of the crater but...

LW: But almost up to the crater?

KF: The checking station up there. From there down.

LW: All the way to the ocean?

KF: No, no. We have some way back. Out in the Kula side. Kamoeli side we get different pastures also.

LW: So that's kind of a challenge. You got all different kinds of environment.

KF: Yeah.

LW: Do they have cattle on all of that?

KF: Yeah.

LW: So the foreman doing the cowboys, is that person doing the cattle, too?

KF: Yeah the cowboy, they take care the cattle work. And all what have to be done. Brand time everybody get together. The outside labor and the cowboys get together and they do branding. And they brand.

LW: That's a big operation.

KF: Oh, yeah.

LW: You have to bring them in first? Do they spread out all over.

KF: No, actually they have them in pastures... different pastures. So they brand different sections of cattle.

LW: They go section by section?

KF: Yeah.

LW: Yeah, that makes sense. So when did you take over then? You took over in 1960 something.

KF: No, my old man. I started working in 1958 but I work in the labor and afterwards, when my old man retired, they put me here. But now it's no different from his times, you know. We don't have that much labor and times have changed. The ranching style... today's style is more easy.

LW: So what's the new style?

KF: Well, the way they operate with cattle, it's different. Totally different. Way back in time they used to take the cattle and mostly horses... driving cattle. Today they do a lot of hauling. And they raise the cattle in a more... actually totally different way. From my time and this time.

LW: So what was your time like? How they worked the cattle.

KF: Well, everything was different. We used to ride a horse from here and used to go up. We used to do more riding. Actually right from the ranch and they ride all over the ranch. Now versus they go with a trailer and take all the horses. They do one pasture and this and that, you know. They don't do like the old days. The old days, the old cowboys ride from here. They drive cattle from here to Waipā and go Waipā, right in back of the mountain and come back. Now it's... it's more modern. Everything is modern.

LW: Yeah, they use four wheelers?

KF: Yeah, four wheelers, all that. Trucks, cars.

LW: How do you remember your dad?

KF: Like?

LW: Tell me a story about your dad.

KF: Well... we used to work here with him and my grandfather. And those days, not because he was your father he's going to... no, you got to put in your time, you know what I mean. You got to be here at 6:30 a.m. Makes you get your lunch can also. You don't go to the store. From here... right from here you go straight to work. And my grandfather was the same thing. And when we had brand we used to make the famous food they used to do. My father used to cook that. We called it salt meat and potatoes. So that was the lunch for the branding and they don't do that anymore but that's what it was. He was the cook for that. Yeah.

LW: He liked to cook?

KF: Oh, yeah. He was the cook man. He was the guy actually for that... the salt meat and potatoes. (Laughs.) That was his job.

LW: He liked to cook?

KF: Yeah, yeah.

LW: When I first started, we were doing an exhibit for the Lyman Museum on the Big Island and Pono Von Holt... do you know him?

KF: No.

LW: But you know Monte Richards? From Kahua Ranch.

KF: No...

LW: When they do branding, they do pot luck. You guys don't do pot luck for branding?



KF: Now they do more... they do and they get more different types of food, you know. First was way back in time... get strictly salt meat. (Laughs.)

LW: Salt meat.

KF: Salt meat and potatoes. That was Manduke Baldwin's time. That was his time. And that's how it was. The family used to go with them. We was young, too. We used to go to the brands, just like a family thing.

LW: Would you work the branding, too?

KF: Yeah, everybody get inside there.

LW: But your dad cooked good, so he did the salt meat and potatoes.

KF: Yeah. And the ranch was me and my brother and Sonny Boy. He died, not too long back.

LW: Sonny Boy is who?

KF: Manoa. You know him?

LW: No, but you put him down here on your paper.

KF: Sonny Boy Manoa... he, me and Blondie, the last of the young guys was here.

LW: And Sonny Boy was your guys' generation?

KF: Yes, we were all the same time. And George Manoa, that's the father. That's the father for Sonny Boy. He used to be Big Island... take care that.

LW: You guys would go do the branding together.

KF: Yeah... branding. And growing up in those days, way back in time, they had horse racing and the ranch used to give a truck so the boys could go down. We always used to go down and play around. They had horse racing. And my father guys had to work the starting gates. And all that kind of stuff.

LW: Oh, that sounds exciting.

KF: Yeah... oh, yeah. In those days it was good fun.

LW: Rich life. So George Manoa is the father. He was working Haleakala...

KF: He used to work Haleakala Ranch, then he went to... what you call that ranch in Big Island... I'm trying to think of...

LW: What side of the Big Island?

KF: In the back side... Kamuela... no, it's not that ranch. Kahuku Ranch.

LW: Oh, Kahuku. Big operation down there. He was a cowboy.... George Manoa...

KF: He was cowboy. Yeah. He was cowboy here for many years. Then afterwards they had the ranch... Manduke's... Mrs. Baldwin, she bought one ranch there and she took George to run the ranch. Him and Freddie... Freddie Rice. Those two guys.

LW: I remember that... that's the combination of names that I heard of... Freddie Rice and George Manoa.

KF: Yeah. They used to take care of that ranch.

LW: You were doing sort of the general manager side of the ranch?

KF: Foreman side. Yeah... one of the foremens...

LW: But did you have to do some cowboying to do that, too?

KF: No. I went in cowboy, but when I was growing up in time when the young boys... me, Blondie and Sonny Boy... Sonny Boy and Blondie goes cowboy and I stayed doing other kind of stuff and I told Manduke Baldwin, hey when I going cowboy? He said... no, I don't want you cowboy. I need you working with your father. So... I'll take you cowboy sometimes. But not... so I did mostly like... do everything else in the ranch. Right down...

LW: Well that's very, very important.

KF: Right down to mechanic work sometimes. Everything. Everything... make the brands so the cattle get brands... and I did all that.

LW: It requires good skills. Management skills, forethought... yeah, lots of stuff to run the department.

KF: That's why I say... Paniolo is not just a cowboy. You got to be born and raised on a ranch before you can say you're one. All you did was just ranch work. Ranch life.

LW: So about how old was Manduke Baldwin when he said that to you?

KF: I think he was maybe in his 50's or something. He was only one boss. Just him. They like nobody else. Today they get more bosses running the ranch.

LW: 'Cause they're like a corporation.

KF: Yeah, but came different, but before he was the one man. He was like the boss and the cowboy. He had to go every day with the cowboys. Every day. And I used to be the one to saddle his horse in the morning and take him (the horse) up. And he come and get on his horse and he go cowboy.

LW: Keep an eye on everything.

KF: Yeah, yeah.

LW: That's a big thing to do, all by yourself. What was he like then?

KF: He was strict. (Laughs.) He was very strict. He was a man that...

LW: Holding a lot of reins, really.

KF: Yeah, he was that guy that says yes and no. In other words, he was the one man. He was boss.

LW: But there seemed to be so much planned for all of you. From getting the kids to school... to having holiday things with the ranch families.

KF: Yeah... the ranch had baseball, softball and skinball. The ranch had their own team. And they was hard to beat. (Laughs.) Us cowboys was good. And they used to played polo even... and some of the ranch guys used to play polo with Manduke's team. And they used to challenge one another. Freddie Rice used to play polo, too. All those guys.

LW: Was Manduke the one who started the polo?

KF: Yeah. He was one of them. I no can tell you beyond that but while I was here it was him.

LW: So he was already involved in that.

KF: Yeah. And they had race horses in those days, too, yuh.

LW: You mean real race horses which is... thoroughbred horses?

KF: Yeah. You used to get some horses down there. They used to get some good races. The old fairgrounds. The industrial area is where they had that old fair grounds.

LW: So would other people from Maui come to the races?

KF: Oh, yeah. A lot of people. Oh, yeah. Had a lot of things going. The ranch men used to go down there and help with the starting gates. Work around there. Help with the horses. Mostly. And the ranch used to give the truck to whoever want to go. For go, they grab it. So we used to pile up in

a truck and go with them. We had a lot of other younger boys, too, but they work little while... summertime. But afterwards they went out and found different jobs... you know, maybe better paying jobs. Let's put it that way. And those days when you're growing up, you not get no place else to go. You work ranch, you work at the Maui Pine, you work plantation. Never had everything else like today. Our days... that's what it was. So you pick your choice. You either work in the ranch or Maui Pine or Plantation.

LW: What is the second one?

KF: Maui Pine. That's where a lot of young people worked, Maui Pine. And the plantation, the sugar cane.

LW: I can tell 'cause a lot of Maui is sort of flat. A lot of places to grow cane, huh?

KF: Yeah, yeah. Maui Pine area just closed down. They have somebody else running the thing but Maui Pine is finished. That's how we was brought up. No had too many places to pick where you work.

LW: Who was David Ventura?

KF: David Ventura used to be a guy who had Kamaole. Out Kula side. We had one place called Kamaole Ranch. You know, it was the same ranch but he used to take care of all that. That was his job.

LW: And he was a foreman?

KF: Yeah, he used to take care of all the cattle there and take care all...

LW: Everything?

KF: Everything. The water, he used to take care all that. Special there... only out that section there.

LW: So what generation was he?

KF: Like my old man.

LW: Same generation as your dad?

KF: Yeah.

LW: And your dad is Louis?

KF: My grandfather was Louis. My father is Ernest.

LW: So David Ventura is Ernest Freitas' generation. That's your dad?

KF: Yeah, yeah. Then had his father. From there go right down like how... he was actually long time at the ranch, too. I no can tell you if... he stayed from kid time. But as far as I know he was from way back in time. He come from his father and he came work in the ranch and his brother work in the ranch. As a matter of fact, he used to work down here. Freddie Ventura used to work here...

LW: With Haleakala?

KF: Yeah, he used to work here as a mechanic.

LW: So he ended up running...

KF: Kamaole Ranch. We call it Kamaole Ranch. Kamaole Section, actually.

LW: What do you remember about David Ventura?

KF: He was a nice guy. I work with him. He was good. Good fisherman and he play music.

LW: What did he play?

KF: He play music on his own. Him and some other guys... get their group guys and they used to play. He was good.

LW: And you have Harold Amaral.

KF: Harold Amaral was here. He was here, too. He came a cowboy foreman.

LW: He was a cowboy foreman. And he worked Haleakala?

KF: He worked Haleakala Ranch. Had foremens before him, but he was one of them afterwards.

LW: And which generation was he?

KF: He would be like... I would say like my father's time. He used to work before that. He came here and he used to work cowboy foreman... actually he was labor then he came cowboy foreman. He used to take care of the racehorses, too.

LW: He was kind of a horse guy?

KF: Yeah. And the polo horses.

LW: So that was kind of his specialty. The horses?

KF: Yeah. But he used to work the cattle job, too.

LW: Okay... so Henry Silva.

KF: Henry Silva... he came afterwards. He wasn't working with us and then he put in about... I think it was maybe... maybe sixteen years, seventeen years I think he worked here. Then he retired. He do a lot of shoeing of the horse and he work cowboy also. He was a good cowboy, too. He's still doing shoeing... matter of fact, he's retired, he's still doing shoeing.

LW: So he lives up here still?

KF: Yeah, he's in Kula side.

LW: Okay, Benjie Rollins.

KF: Benjie Rollins. Benjie Rollins was my cousin. He was one jockey. He used to be the jockey and rodeo man. Lot of life in him. A lot of fun. He died when he was fifty-one, I think. A lot of time he fell down and hit his head down. One time he hit his head down in the arena and that was the end of him. He went into a coma and that was the end of him. But he used have a lot of falls from jockeys, and playing rodeos he used to ride bulls. Used to be a rodeo guy.

LW: So he's your father's... no, your generation.

KF: Yeah, that's my mother's father's sister's boy. From my grandfather on my mother's side.

LW: So more like your father's generation?

KF: I would say yeah...

LW: But he's still your cousin?

KF: Yeah, he was a little younger than my old man.

LW: But still older than you?

KF: Yeah. He used to live right here on the ranch.

LW: Just up the road from you.

KF: Right up here. The house right here.

LW: So this house up here is an older home?

KF: This house right here... when you come out the door, you see the house right up here. It's the only one there. That one we get one, two, three... that get ranchmen living inside. Then Peter Baldwin has two up there. That's from the ranch also. But he leasing them. But some of the houses

left from about forty something. The rest they knocked it all down. The dairy had all their own houses.

LW: Forty something... that's amazing. So does that come under your...

KF: No.

LW: You don't have to care for the homes?

KF: Well the ranch used to hire some carpenters some time. Once in a while they used to come fix them. But not, you know...

LW: Not day to day.

KF: No, no.

LW: That's not part of your job day to day?

KF: No. No.

LW: One more person... Glenn Souza.

KF: Well Glenn Souza came more in the modern time. He wasn't here when we was here... the older times. He came more...

LW: In the '60's... the '70's...

KF: No, no. Maybe. Glenn only put here what... sixteen years, seventeen years... in that line. He died what... two, three years ago.

LW: He was maybe your dad...

KF: He was way younger than us, you know.

LW: Even younger than you?

KF: Yeah, he's way younger than us.

LW: Maybe your son's generation?

KF: No I don't have... I had two daughters. A little older... older than my daughters. I would say he would be in his 50's today.

LW: Tell me about your job at the ranch. I agree that ranching has the side that you're working at and it's so important. Keeps the ranch going. I thought maybe it would be good to describe that a

little bit. I talk very frequently to ranch managers, and I talk also to just the cowboy, but you're doing something a little different, so what is your job, then?

KF: Well... I still... right now, there's more... other. I'm not doing exactly what... while we was doing but I used to take care of the water system. I still do. Take care of a lot of the water system and fixing some cars sometimes. Whatever we can fix. We don't have a lot of things that we don't have now but...

LW: Like what?

KF: Before I used to work slaughterhouse... and tractors, fixing and driving equipment like tractors. And do anything like my father guys' time. But now it's a little different. They kind of break up being a foreman like you only take care so much.

LW: But you have people that you hire to do those things now? Okay... so water system.

KF: Water system... that's number one.

LW: So tell me about the Haleakala Ranch water system.

KF: Well, we have our own water. So much of our own water. We call it Puniau Hill going up the crater side. It's an old thing that's been there way before my time and that's the water that supplies the mountain area. Then you have the County water.

LW: Wait, wait... so this crater... is it a crater...?

KF: Yeah, Haleakala Crater. As you go up the Haleakala Crater, there's a place Hosmer Grove... you ever been there?

LW: No, what do you call it?

KF: They call it Hosmer Grove. Right below in that area we have our old watershed.

LW: Oh, you have a reservoir?

KF: Well... we have a reservoir right below that. And we have spring water that comes. That's what take care the mountain areas.

LW: So the spring water is for the mountain areas. And what was the spring called?

KF: We call it Waikamoi. Hanamanu, actually.

LW: So way up is spring fed.

KF: Yeah, the mountain.



LW: So you pump that out...?

KF: No, we just get a flow... water flow. It take care the whole mountain areas. Not all the mountain areas but then we have the County line goes across on the lower side.

LW: So you pump into tanks.

KF: Yeah, we get tanks, to into the tanks and supply the water troughs. That's the most thing... that's the biggest thing that we got to take care because that's our water. When get droughts... you know, you kind of...

LW: Do you guys get droughts?

KF: Oh we had a mean one last year. I think all the ranches suffered. I think Big Island...

LW: Oh, the Big Island was suffering.

KF: We just got this rains back so everything started to come back again. We used to feed cattle. We never feed cattle, you know. My days we used to get droughts, we used to feed cattle... use the paninis. We used to burn the thorns out and the cattle would eat them. Way back in my time. In Manduke's time.

LW: You just burn the needles?

KF: Yeah.

LW: How do you do that?

KF: With the torch.

LW: I imagine if they didn't have needles on them they'd be kind of good.

KF: Well yeah... and the Panini has a fruit on them.

LW: Somebody was telling me how they used to pick Panini fruit. And there used to be so much out by Waimea.

KF: The paninis, they call them.

LW: There used to be so much that you could have buckets of them.

KF: But you got to watch how you clean them. Because they have a lot of small little needles. So you got to dust them off before you pick'um. And you take-um out, make sure it's clean and you watch how you cut'um. And the fruit inside is sweet. You got the red one and the white one.

LW: And the cattle like both?

KF: Oh yeah, they eat'um. That's how we kept the cattle going. From the droughts. Had some droughts.

LW: In Manduke's time was that water system all in place then?

KF: Oh, yeah... always was here. The same system.

LW: So you have your own reservoir...

KF: Only for the upper lands.

LW: So the spring feeds the reservoir?

KF: Mmm hmm.

LW: And the reservoir you pump out to the...

KF: We just water flow them...

LW: Oh, water flow... gravity.

KF: Yeah, gravity flow to the next tanks. And the next tank feeds out to whatever... water trough we have in that pasture.

LW: To get up there, takes a lot of effort to get out to those things.

KF: Oh yeah... before I used to walk them. In the mountains... to get to the place. But now they get these little ATVs so now you can ride going out there. (Laughs.) The wild, wild West came better. (Laughs.) And we used to ride the horse, even, in there. Way back in time I used to ride the horse. But now you don't have to do that. Like I say that's the old, old cowboy and this is the modern generation.

LW: Well, it's got different. You have to care for both. You have to care for a horse. You have to care for an ATV. Now an ATV, you can abuse a little bit more than if you abuse a horse. But it's not going to run for you very long if you don't take care of it. So do you have to do any more big equipment work these days? What were you doing using big equipment then?

KF: Well, Manduke's time, I tell you honestly they would do everything with labor. They had no equipment. No had no equipment like now. Those days everything was done the hard way. We make a fence, you dig a hole. Today they pound a post inside. My days you used to dig a hole and put a post inside. You know what I mean?

LW: How do they pound a post today.

KF: Now they got machinery, a thing that pounds the post in. That's how everybody make fences now... the easy way. Our days it was dig hole and...

LW: Yeah... have a crew of men and go dig the holes. Fence... do you care for the fences, too?

KF: Well, yeah. In a way. Way back I used to do all that. But now they got other guys to take care of that, too.

LW: Do you manage those guys that take care of fence or does somebody else...?

KF: Yeah... more like they get their own.

LW: But back before you had to manage fences...

KF: Yeah, I did it.

LW: Yeah, 'cause on this huge ranch there must be miles of fences.

KF: Oh yeah, fences and corrals.

LW: What do you have to do to keep up a corral?

KF: A lot of maintenance. We used to make them. I made a couple of corrals. You know everything has maintenance. Later on things deteriorate and you got to fix it up.

LW: So you're... you had to create some corrals...

KF: Yeah, some we had to make, yeah. Haleakala Pen. I made that right up there. We call that Haleakala Pen... that's the ranch name.

LW: So who's Johnny Sakamoto?

KF: Johnny Sakamoto was the foreman before my father. He was the guy that used to be the overall foreman. And my father took his place. When he was working, I was working. I was with Johnny Sakamoto.

LW: So he was older than your father?

KF: Yes, yes.

LW: He was more your grandfather's time?

KF: I would say... yeah. I think actually a little younger than my grandfather. But he used to be the overall foreman, like how my father was. And I... when I worked here, used to get like you call stable boy. And I used to work with Johnny like a stable boy. So many years. I take care the horses and help them doctor the horses and feed the horses, and go feedlot and feed the feedlot cattle and haul meat to the markets and all that kind stuff.

LW: So Haleakala had a feedlot, too?

KF: Oh, yeah.

LW: Where was that?

KF: Right above the old slaughterhouse. Right about here.

LW: How many head could that handle?

KF: Well, they had pretty good. Used to get their own feedlot. I had to feed them every day. They used to mix their own feed and the dairy mix'um and take'um out and feed them and they get the slaughterhouse right there. So they bring them in. Used to get their own feedlot.

LW: That's something. 'Cause then you don't have to ship the...

KF: They used to ship some cattle but they used to kill their own cattle. And they had their own markets.

LW: And they'd just market them here?

KF: I used to go there and deliver to the markets. We had several markets the ranchers take care of.

LW: One time somebody was telling me about how they used to deliver meat in Hawi. You know up in the North... in Kohala, on the Big Island. And he said he used to go... like house to house. But you took the... the ranch took to the markets in town...

KF: To the markets. Yeah. We used to go there... those days. They section them out. You know they cut them in half and section in quarters, so you get the front quarter and the hind quarter. And then the market take care the rest.

LW: They butchered them down.

KF: Yeah... they select them.

LW: So you took the quarters down to the market.

KF: Whatever... they buy the whole things, we take the four quarters. They buy half... and it was Johnny's job, too. Johnny Sakamoto, he used to take care that. Up the slaughterhouse he used to scale the beef and we go out and deliver them. Had about... maybe a couple of markets we had down there.

LW: So when you worked in the slaughterhouse, that was just Haleakala beef?

KF: Yeah, just only Haleakala Ranch. Just only Haleakala beef. They take care their own.

LW: Did you do that once a month, once a week...?

KF: Once a week. Sometime it was twice. All depend... if the markets like more meat. If they kill so much, then sometime in the middle of the week we got to kill some more. Just for keep the markets going.

LW: It was kind of based on demand?

KF: Yeah, yeah. Right.

LW: That's kind of a big job. The slaughtering job is a big job. And there's a lot to deal with.

KF: Yeah. And I used to work there, too. With my old man and this guy, Tony De Coit and this guy, Paipuni... the old Hawaiian guy, he used to work there, too. And he died already but he used to work there my father's time. That was the main butchermen. Was Tony, my father and this guy, Joana Paipuni.

LW: They did things by hand in those days?

KF: Oh, yes. You split the thing in half all by one hatchet, the old way. Now they get saws. Way back afterwards... afterwards and then they got the saw. But when we started off, when I worked with them, it was all hatchet. Right down... they split the thing in half. Everything was all done the hard way.

LW: Manually.

KF: Yes.

LW: So how do you remember that Hawaiian fellow that...

KF: Well lived on the same ranch. Right next to each other. And he had eight in the family... kids, you know. And we had eight also. We used to live right next to each other and was raised up together in other words. Some of the kids, they still alive yet and they're still running around. They all left, you know. They didn't stay here. They left. They didn't work here. I mean they worked here summertime, but then they...

LW: They got jobs.

KF: Yeah they went to go work someplace else besides. But me, Blondie and Sonny Boy... the last of the Mohicans. (Laughs.)

LW: So your other five siblings decided not to work for the ranch?

KF: Yeah, they went out and they was working Maui Pine and then one was working in the dairy. I had a brother work here when the dairy was going. Then the dairy closed down and he went someplace else. But as far as in the ranch, was me and Blondie. Only the two guys that worked here. We stayed here. We stayed here from the day from start to end.

LW: No kidding... many years. So what number are you in the lineup?

KF: Number three.

LW: And Blondie was number...

KF: Number two.

LW: So the oldest was a girl?

KF: Yeah, my sister Shirley.

LW: So Blondie was the oldest boy?

KF: Yes.

LW: And you were number two?

KF: No, Blondie was number two and I was number three.

LW: You're number two boy.

KF: We had five brothers and three sisters. And they always had big families, you know. Even my father, he came from a big family also. My grandfather used to live right in the same area. Same place where we used to live up in the ranch.

LW: So you could just go over and visit your grandfather. He'd come by the door and say get out here, Blackie.

KF: No, we'd go there every Sunday. My grandmother used to make a big pot of Portagee soup and all the family come eat Portagee soup. And she used to make bread. Portuguese bread.

LW: Sweet bread?

KF: Yeah.

LW: Oh, yummy. And she'd make ten loaves at a time and lay them out on the beds and...

KF: That's how they used to live. And my grandfather guys, they used to work for smaller money yet than our times. I don't know how they made it, even.

LW: Well, they got a lot from the ranch, too.

KF: Yeah, yeah.

LW: So they didn't seventeen outfits. You just needed one for Sunday and two or three changes during the week and that's plenty.

KF: My grandfather used to be the one... he used to take care the fence work and he was a real honest guy. When you work with him, there's no such thing as if they give you forty-five minutes lunch you're going to get forty-six. You're going to get forty-five. He was... everything is for the company. He was a hundred and ten percent. Let's put it that way. And not because I was his grandson I used to get away with... no, I had to work like everybody else. It wasn't easy. He didn't take me and say oh, son... no, no... you work.

LW: That's good ethics, right? You learn a good work ethic.

KF: Yeah. And my uncles. I had some uncles work here also. They start off every summer. Some started off here then they went someplace else. But some stood back. My Uncle Windy was one of them.

LW: Windy?

KF: Yeah, Abel... Abel Freitas. Used to call him his name, but we used to call him Windy but he still was Abel Freitas. Used to be a cowboy on the ranch. George Manoa's time. He was a good cowboy. He died young, too.

LW: He was your father's brother?

KF: My father's brother, yeah.

LW: Cowboys were kind of wild sometimes, huh?

KF: Oh, yeah. But they was good cowboys. They could make horses good, and everything was horses, so horses was their life and ranching was... cows and horses, you know.

LW: But your dad's side kind of did like fixing things and keeping the machinery running and...

KF: Yeah. Like I say my uncles, some of them went cowboy. But my father was more like a... just like how I am. Do anything...

LW: Yeah, do everything.

KF: Anything had to be done, he was the one to go out there and get it done.

LW: You have to learn a variety of skills and...

KF: That's why Manduke wanted me to stay next to my father. Tell me no, you work there. I need you there. I don't need you cowboy. I'll take you cowboy, but I don't need you cowboy. Poor guy. (Laughs.)

LW: No, I think it's important. I mean anybody who works on ranches knows that that's important. A cowboy may be the glamorous thing but it's not necessarily the most important thing. So Manduke was wise.

KF: Yeah, that's why I say Paniolo is not just a cowboy, you know. Just to keep the ranch going. Plenty people think cowboy is a Paniolo, but it's not only that. It's just a ranch hand. Like us guys we was born and raised in the ranch. We stood here. From kid time to... I stood here till I was thirty years old. Then I bought my house in Makawao. But I used to live in the ranch houses for... until that time. From born till thirty years old and I got married, I live in the ranch house and then I went out and buy my own. And till today that's where I live.

LW: Well then it's your property, right.

KF: Yes, right. 'Cause you know those days, they give you house but as the younger guys like me, Blondie and Sonny Boy, they said that when you get retired, you got to go look for your own house. So we felt that then... you know... Like my father guys they could live in the house, and my grandfather guys could live in the house until they die.

LW: Until they die.

KF: Until they die.

LW: Is that what they did? The both of them?

KF: Yeah. My old man afterwards bought his own house.

LW: Oh, he did. But your grandfather died on the ranch.

KF: My grandfather stayed. And my grandmother stayed also. When he died and my grandmother went to go live the son, Windy... Abel Freitas.

LW: So your grandfather... his people were already here?



KF: As far as his family, I not too sure about the family.

LW: Just wondering. 'Cause you know some of the families can go way back.

KF: They came from Portugal, and came here.

LW: But not your grandfather... his parents or before that, yuh?

KF: I would think so.

LW: What about your grandmother?

KF: My grandmother was the same thing... she was a Rego... De Rego.

LW: And now your wife's... no, your mother. Your father was a Freitas. Your mother...

KF: And you don't believe... my grandmother on my Freitas side... you know when she was married to the Freitas... she was a Rego. My grandmother on my mother's side... actually my grandfather was a Rego. My grandfather was a Rego, and my grandma on the Freitas side was a Rego. And so Benjie Rollins come under my... my grandfather. My grandfather's sister was Benjie Rollins mother. That's how we related. But you get two Regos two sides now. Don't ask me. I cannot tell you that. (Laughs.) My grandfather used to work plantation. He used to be one plantation guy. On my mother's side. That's what he does until he retired. And you don't believe... he never had license for drive a car. Till he was sixty-five years old and he retired. And the Chevrolet guy, Gordon von Tempski told... he (my grandfather) told Gordon well, I buy that '57 Chevy he (Gordon) had, you know... but I don't have license. Gordon say I'll take care of that. And he come send the guy train him to drive.

LW: Oh, interesting.

KF: Yeah. He used to work plantation guy and he never did have license. He live right in the area where he works.

LW: So he didn't need to drive.

KF: When he got his license, he still no could drive. (Laughs.) One time he put a flagman On the road here... he put him in the ditch. Hoo... the old man still couldn't drive. (Laughs.)

LW: Well you live close to where you need to be, you don't need to drive. Let's see now... but your wife's family are...

KF: She was a Vegas. Actually her father was a Vegas. My wife, RoseMarie, and I will be married 51 years this May.

LW: So her father worked sugar or...

KF: No, he was working for the County. He worked different jobs way back in time. Then he end up with the County. They both dead already, though. Her father and mother. And so is mine.

LW: You lived next door to... what was the guy's name again?

KF: Joe Paipuni. And my grandfather. We all lived in the same area. We had another oldtimer. He was a cowboy foreman. Johnny Holomalua and four guys that live in there. Also Tony Amoral live across the way.

LW: So are your daughters involved in ranching?

KF: No, no.

LW: Do you have nephews in ranching?

KF: No, no... no nephews, no nephews.

LW: You have two children... both girls?

KF: Yeah, Laura and Marlene. This is Laura and this is Marlene.

LW: And they live here on Maui?

KF: Oh, yeah...

LW: And they have children?

KF: Oh, yeah... they have kids, too.

LW: How many grandkids do you have?

KF: Let's see now... I have four grandkids, Jenna, Travis, Jo-Lynn, Auguie.

LW: So two for each?

KF: Four grandkids and great grandkids... ah... going be five. The great-grandkids are, Kaedan, Jaleigh, Colton, Nohealani.

LW: So your oldest daughter had two?

KF: Well she had a girl and a boy. Both of them had a girl and a boy.

LW: Do you remember noticing differences between the ethnicities in your little community.

KF: What you mean?

LW: Well, something that was really Hawaiian about that family or something that was very Portuguese about your family. About... you know, the guy two houses down is Filipino, that...

KF: But over here we had a lot of Hawaiians working here. And we had the Portuguese also. Had plenty Hawaiians... pure Hawaiians. When they used to be working at the ranch yet. Foremen used to be cowboys also and work different jobs also. But had plenty Hawaiians working here way back in time. Before my time, maybe. The ranch was kind of like... had some Japanese and then had some Portuguese and Hawaiians. And we had some Puerto Ricans. In the dairy, as I say when they start off, the dairy and the ranch used to work together. Sometime the ranch man go down the dairy work, just to help out some things.

LW: Did you work with the dairy.

KF: No, I was in the ranch, but there was times we had to go do some job down for the dairy when the ranchman used to go down. Before they joined, got into the union. Once they got into the union then the ranch was the ranch and the dairy was the dairy.

LW: That's interesting that the dairy decided to go union and the ranch decided to not to. Why do you think that?

KF: No, I was in the ranch but there was times when we had to do some jobs for the dairy when the ranchman used to go down. Before they joined. They joined the union. Once they got into the union, the ranch was the ranch and the dairy was the dairy.

LW: That's interesting that the dairy decided to go union and the ranch decided not to. Why do you think that is?

KF: I don't know. The ranchman all used to work on the ranch and the dairy used to be the dairy. But afterwards, then they separated. When the thing joined union, they separated, they made the dairy the dairy. And the ranch was the ranch. But under the same owner.

LW: Do you remember which union it was?

KF: No, I don't. And then Peter Baldwin took over afterwards. That's the father.

LW: What's a tire water trough system?

KF: Well, I started off these tire water troughs. Just... it's not way back in time. It's just like so many years back. We had to go down at this plantation, we get these Turner hauler tires. And I cut it out... one section. Me the guy that started that. We put it down and you cement it at the water troughs. Before they had a metal water trough, but they get rotten. Tire will never get rotten.

LW: You put the... you cement the tire down?

KF: Yeah... you put it down, you cut one end open... you know, the tire has a rim... you cut one side open, you leave the other side and the thing comes out. So you cement just the opening there. And that's it.

LW: So these are big tires, like truck tires?

KF: Yeah... bigger.

LW: Bigger?

KF: The plantation has the big Turner haulers that carries the cane. So I started that with Turner haulers tires and now all the ranches are doing that. To cut them is a problem. It's a little...

LW: Takes some effort.

KF: Yeah, you got to know the tricks, how to cut them. But it's a little hard to cut, but it's all right. When you get it done, a water trough going stay there forever.

LW: So you cement around the outside or...?

KF: No, just there... just the inside.

LW: And then they stay? And the cattle come and put their nose in and...?

KF: And we get water. Put a floater... the water come into the water trough and we have a floater, we shut off the water when things full. And then they drink the water in there.

LW: That sounds like a good invention.

KF: Yeah, yeah. And everybody till when I made them... and then I iron out what... you know, the problems going cause and how for make them. So now they just... hey, Ulapalakua Ranch, now all the ranches using them. Those tires. Because it's... it lasts you forever.

LW: Well, that's what a good foreman does. Is iron out all the problems, yuh?

KF: Yeah, that's right. That's right.

LW: So what's your biggest problem?

KF: What you mean?

LW: What do you have to iron out?

KF: Nothing much right now. I got them pretty much...

LW: It's ironed out.

KF: Yeah.

LW: So keeping that water system going was one of them.

KF: And our water system... it's been always... in one ranch it's always a problem. We always get broke pipes and you get cattle broke water troughs. And the floaters so you always... so the water is... cattleman with animals... that's what it is. Water troughs is always broke and you got to fix them and same thing like water troughs, you know. So it's one of the biggest maintenance around is the waterlines and take care the cattle.

LW: What do you think makes a good foreman? A good ranch foreman?

KF: What I think make a good ranch foreman? Doing your job right. Get things done. Yeah.

LW: Sounds like it. What about when you look ahead at ranches in the future, what do you see in terms of where ranching is going?

KF: It's hard to say because they try all different methods. Now they get cattle company and they keeping the meat... they trying to keep the meat in Hawai'i. And they try other kind ways, too. Otherwise you got to ship the cattle to the mainland and the cost of the cattle so they're trying to work it out this way now. Now I think it's going to... I think it's harder... now. Developing the lands and the ranch itself... some lands and they have all the land they had. You only have that much cattle that you can raise like way back in time. So... I think ranching... I hope it goes on for life... my life, anyway. But I think it's harder now to raise cattle. 'Cause get more things they got to do with the cattle that way back in time could get away with. How to kill cattle and everything else. The markets, you know.

LW: I understand you make stainless steel horse bits and spurs?

KF: Yeah, I mess around with that and I made some spurs and I... I made some bits. All handmade... by hand. You cut them and you hacksaw. Regular way of... the old way of doing them.

LW: What's the old way of doing them?

KF: You cut and you make your own. You don't use all this modern machines to cut them. I cut my own with hacksaw and file them. File them down and to make them. I get some at home. If I know I would have brought it so you can see it.

LW: Are they rough edged, then?

KF: No, no. I can show it to you.

LW: How do you get it... you sand them?

KF: After pau, you get them, it's all like stainless steel. You sand them down and when you pau with them it's like looking at chrome. Some of them a chrome on a car. But I put designs on them also. I make teardrops on them and all with file. And some diamonds, you know.

LW: How long does it take to make a pair of spurs?

KF: What I do, I used to make them and I do them and I just put them down. You got to be in the right... you know what I mean? Not like I was in a rush. I just do it like a hobby thing. it. Afterwards I made so much and I had stock and I said oh, plenty people want me to make for them. But I said no, this is one of a kind. So when I go someday my grandkids can take them and... If you want to see the spurs I can take you my house and show you some spurs... if you want to see it.

LW: Sure. Are they close by?

KF: Yeah. You know where Makawao, yuh? It's right there. Just a matter of ten minutes, you stay there. If you want to see how it looks? Then you get an idea.

LW: Sure. Anything else you want to add?

KF: A lot of things but you know...

LW: A lot of things like what kind of things?

KF: All kind of things but you know... I can't remember.

LW: I know... it's hard isn't it?

KF: Yeah.

LW: Well if you were going to describe for one of your grandkids, what it was like when you were eighteen years old, what might you tell them about living on the ranch and working on the ranch when you were eighteen?

KF: Well working on the ranch, one thing that was good about it was you would say, the people here way back in time everybody was almost like families. The ranching was more like you feel like you're working on a ranch. And it's a good life in a sense. Don't ask me if I would do it again if I would start all over in life but, it's not a real... you don't get rich, let's put it that way.

LW: Is it like a community?

KF: Yeah... way back it was more like a family thing, you know. And it still is but it's not as big as it was.

LW: Lot of people you grew up with, all of kids same age, could go in your neighbor's kitchen and that mom would feed you. You could all go to grandma's house and she might feed you.

KF: Yeah, yeah.

LW: It does sound like a nice life style.

KF: It was... it was a good life style. You don't have to deal with the people outside. You just work within the ranch and it's just open country. It's the difference from working in the city part, you know. But it's all right.

LW: Good life, huh?

KF: Good life. I still alive yet. (Laughs.)